

Supporting evidence for increasing opportunities for professionals across early childhood to come together

Recommendation #1. Increase opportunities for professionals from across the early childhood landscape to come together

a. Bring together child welfare, early intervention, early care and education, and home visiting staff in county-level groups or statewide conferences to reduce siloed work experiences. Shared trainings and complementary pathways for career advancement can help build awareness of systems of supports for families and of career opportunities across service types.

b. Create communities of practice across home visiting models and other early childhood system staff/programs.

The evidence presented here suggests that **increasing opportunities for professionals from across the early childhood system** will benefit both the home visiting field and the broader early childhood field. Over the course of this study, stakeholders shared how home visiting programs and other early childhood programs often serve the same families. In addition, the workforce is fluid; stakeholders shared how home visitors often come from the early care and education field and leave for opportunities in education or preschool settings. Developing shared trainings and complementary pathways for career advancement will only strengthen the workforce as it continues to grow and meet the needs of California’s families.

Home visiting workforce cross over with other fields

The home visiting workforce overlaps with other related fields. The majority of home visiting staff in California have previously worked in early childhood education; however, staff have also worked in school systems, social work settings, hospitals, and the child welfare system (Table 1).

Table 1. Other settings where home visitors previously worked (n = 361)

	HOME VISITORS
Early childhood education (child care or Pre-Kindergarten)	58%
School (K-12)	31%
Social work	21%
Hospital	19%
Child welfare/child protective services	7%

Source: Home visiting workforce follow-up survey, 2021

While the majority of home visiting staff reported they plan to stay in the home visiting profession for the foreseeable future, staff also indicated they may move into other fields, such as social work, early childhood education, the child welfare system, school systems, and hospital settings (Table 2).

Table 2. In five years, do you see yourself working with families in the following settings? (n = 414)

	HOME VISITORS
Continuing in home visiting	66%
Social work	37%
Early childhood education (child care or Pre-Kindergarten)	25%
Child welfare/child protective services	19%

	HOME VISITORS
School (K-12)	17%
Hospital	13%
Other	8%

Source: Home visiting workforce follow-up survey, 2021

Note: Percentages add up to more than 100 because respondents were able to select multiple options.

Cross model trainings

Cross-model trainings that were developed during the pandemic may serve as a way to bring together different models, programs, and early childhood workforces with similar career pathways for career advancement. In interviews, home visiting staff reported positive experiences participating in cross-model trainings, such as ZERO TO THREE and Rapid Response Virtual Home Visiting. Example quotes included:

- “We have trainings almost every week, a variety from ZERO TO THREE, to our own program specialists, to district trainings and other partners that we partner up with that we collaborate in different trainings, such as [other programs], Blue Cross, and even some of our own coworkers do trainings like on breastfeeding or car safety.” – Home Visitor, Spring/Summer 2021 Interview
- “The webinars that I have been taking on ways to engage families, they give very helpful tips on how to approach the parents and how to maintain engagement...And I would say mental health trainings, different types of webinars also were being offered through different organizations like... Rapid Response-Virtual Home Visiting. It's a website that offers several trainings. And there is another one, Start Early.” – Home Visitor, Spring/Summer 2021 Interview

Summary

Over the past 18 months, stakeholders shared how home visiting programs and other early childhood programs are often serving the same families. The early childhood system can be strengthened by increasing opportunities for professionals from across the system to come together for shared trainings that support pathways for career advancement. Cross-model trainings developed during the pandemic demonstrated the usefulness of shared trainings in building awareness of systems of support for families and career opportunities across service types. These trainings also highlighted common goals across home visiting models. Because there are many online options for trainings, stakeholders noted it would be helpful to have a catalogue of what trainings exist, their topical components, and logistics (e.g., cost, length) to aid programs in identifying trainings that fit their needs. Additionally, stakeholders reported that shared trainings and communities of practice build a sense of community across different home visiting programs and models. Taken together, this approach to training has the potential for establishing shared trainings across home visiting and other early childhood fields, particularly in light of the substantial workforce crossover.